THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) Physically challenged children are being provided essential support services in regular schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in Maharashtra. State SSA follows a zero rejection policy, wherein a multi option model is used to reach out to the Children with Special Needs (CWSN). The State SSA has appointed resource teachers, provided aids and appliances to CWSN and also provided corrective surgeries to CWSN as support services. State SSA has issued directions to the districts regarding barrier-free environment (ramps, handrails and disabled friendly toilets) and 58864 schools have been provided with ramps and handrails. As a result of its multipronged initiatives under SSA, the State has succeeded, in enrolling 3,54,134 CWSN in regular schools, 9676 CWSN in home based education and school readiness programme has been provided to 400 CWSN on pilot basis.

The Government of Maharashtra is also implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) in the State under which educational facilities are provided to disabled children studying in common schools to facilitate their retention in the school system. These facilities include assistance to the schools in the form of special teachers, assistive aids and enquipments and text books.

Extension campus of IITs in Maharashtra

1732. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Institute of Technology, Mumbai is holding talks with the Maharashtra Government to set up an extension campus in the State and this centre would be second centre to be opened;

(b) whether the centre would initially offerr courses in continuing education and short term management programmes;

(c) whether this move is significant, considering that in 2007, Prime Minister had announced the setting up of eight new IITs, so that the institutes cater to the larger student populace; and

(d) if so, by when the centre is likely to be operationalized in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay have approached the Government of Maharashtra to allocate land for setting up a satellite campus with a view to expansion in intake capacity, and not for an extension centre.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Quality of food under Mid-Day Meal Scheme

†1733. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering any alternative mechanism, in view of continuous complaints being received against quality of food being served to the students in schools under Mid-day Meal Scheme;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether Government has received any suggestion from people's representatives or any organizations;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) Government's response on those suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) As and when complaints are brought to the notice of the Government, the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations are asked to conduct suitable enquiry and initiate corrective actions to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

(b) to (d) Recently, proposal to introduce biscuits in place of hot cooked meal under the Mid-day Meal Scheme was received. After careful consideration, the Government has not supported the proposal because the replacement of the Mid-day Meal Programme through supply of biscuits would not be in the nutritional interest of children, since it does not fulfil the nutritional norms, dietary requirement and satiety of children.

Appointment of Punjabi teachers

1734. SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) how many Punjabi teachers have been appointed in different States under the scheme of promotion of Minority Languages in the country;

(b) what is the progress of appointment of 100 Punjabi teachers, as sanctioned by the Ministry during 2007 in Himachal Pradesh; and

(c) whether other States, especially Haryana, Delhi, J&K have also applied for grant under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) There is no scheme by the name of 'Promotion of Minority Languages'. However, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of appointment of Language teachers implemented by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), during the year 20-2008, only one State *viz.* Himachal Pradesh had submitted a proposal for appointment of Punjabi teachers. The said proposal sought assistance for appointment of 100 Punjabi and 100 Urdu Teachers, under the Scheme. The proposal was approved by the MHRD and the sanction dated 23.10.2007 was conveyed to the Education Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh for appointment of 100 Punjabi and 100 Urdu teachers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of appointment of Language teachers.

(b) As regards the progress of appointment of 100 Punjabi teachers by the Government of Himachal Pradesh, information is being collected from the Government Himachal Pradesh and would be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(c) During the year 2007-08, the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, and Mizoram have been sanctioned funds for appointment of Language teachers under the scheme.